

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a passport for international travel?

Yes. A passport establishes your identity and United States citizenship to anyone who needs to know. It also guarantees your admittance to the U.S. following an international trip. It is a requirement for any person traveling out of the country and must be valid for 6 months after departure.

How do I get a U.S. passport?

You can visit a local passport acceptance office or post office and ask for a blank application or request one by mail. Read carefully the State Department's rules on downloaded passport applications. You will need to submit a certified copy of your birth certificate.

How long does it take to get my passport?

Passports can take up to 10 weeks to be process and returned. You should allow plenty of time before your expected travel date to receive your passport. If you need a passport immediately, the U.S. State Department can expedite the passport application.

You are encouraged to send your renewal, amendment or application in by express courier service (such as FedEx or UPS) and include a pre-paid airbill to return the passport by express courier.

Do I need a visa for international travel? A visa is a document that some countries require in addition to your passport, in order to travel within their borders. Many European and Caribbean countries do not require visas but it is best to check with The Quest Travel Group. Visa requirements are different for all countries and can change over time, so be sure to check the status of your destination. For US passport holders, no visas are required for Israel, Greece and most of Europe. Jordan and Egypt require passport information only.

Will my electrical appliances (ex. electric shavers, hair dryers, irons, chargers, etc) work abroad? Not always. The outlets abroad may support a plug that looks different (two cylinders) than the one used in the U.S. and may use a different voltage. Most U.S. outlets are 110V while most European and Middle East outlets are 240V. Many non-U.S. electrical outlets have differently shaped plugs. To get the correct setup for your device, you should check the traveling packages at Walmart, . Radio Shack or Kmart etc. Some devices only work on 110V (U.S. standard) and therefore need a transformer. You will want to check the documentation for your device to determine what you need. Others can be dual rated and can be changed to handle both

Hair Blowers are included in the hotel rooms. If you plan on bringing electric shavers, irons, laptop/phone chargers or other electrical appliances, you should bring a small converter kit. Do not forget to bring one, as the converter kits can be a limited quantity at the hotels.

Will I be able to make calls with my cell phone while overseas? Your coverage will depend on the service provider or carrier that you use and roaming charges can be high. If you have a personal cell phone, check with your provider on coverage issues. You will want to know whether your existing phone will work in your country of travel, and whether you will be able to get both voice (phone) and data (email/web) services.

AT&T: widely available

T-Mobile: widely available

Verizon: available in some countries

Nextel/Sprint: no international coverage

Can I get a cell phone for my trip? If you would like to use a phone while overseas, there are some other options.

Rent a cell phone upon arrival at your destination

Buy a disposable phone in the country of travel

Purchase a compatible SIM card for your existing phone, in the country of travel

Or better yet, buy a calling card when you arrive so you will know what you are spending. This is the economical way to do it.

Make sure to review the capabilities, limits and charges of your new cell phone plan. If you use a phone other than your own, you will not have access to your address book, so you may wish to print out a copy before you leave.

Will I be able to access the Internet with my laptop while overseas? Most laptops have both WIFI (802.11) and wired Ethernet ports that can be used in many hotels and convention centers around the world. Check your computer manual for basic instructions on configuring Windows XP, Windows ME and Apple Macintosh computers.

There are other alternatives if wireless and Ethernet service is not available, including cellular cards, WIFI hot spots and dial-up connections at your hotel.

Do I need travel insurance? The Catholic Pilgrim Office strongly recommends travel insurance for all of our travelers. In the event that a situation arises that prohibits travel, travel insurance may offer protection that covers costs, insures travel and assists while you are abroad. You may choose to either purchase or decline the coverage offered. Before purchasing a policy, be sure to review all of the policy's exclusions to ensure that a specific policy is right for you and your particular trip.

Travel insurance can be booked through Travelex after each passenger receives their document kit. Be sure to purchase the program within 14 days of your initial trip deposit date in order to take advantage of the Pre-existing Conditions Waiver.

Do I need to have any vaccinations before going overseas? Most countries do not require anything in addition to your routine vaccinations. Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Greece do not require shots.

What if I get sick while traveling abroad?

Should you become ill while traveling, you will receive prompt and adequate care. Please note that you will be responsible for immediate expenses of any doctor or hospital visit, unless prior arrangements with the insurance company have been made. Contact your insurance carrier to determine your overseas coverage.

How do I exchange my money?

We recommend you wait until reaching your destination to exchange your money. There are several ways to do this:

The quickest and most convenient method is through ATM machines. ATM cards are widely accepted across Europe and the Middle East and generally give you the best exchange rate. Please contact your bank with specific questions regarding fees and eligibility.

Traveler's checks are not generally accepted at hotels. Many exchange outlets and banks will also accept U.S. cash dollars in exchange for the local currency. Please be aware that some places charge commission or adjust the exchange rate.

International exchange rates change on a daily basis. Be sure to write down the exact exchange rate of your destination before departure to ensure you get a similar rate.

Will the residents in my destination speak English?

Most people in the Holy Lands speak and write English. In Europe, do not assume that you will be able to communicate with everyone you meet overseas. Some people know a little bit of English, some may not know any at all. It is always good to write down a few important words and phrases in the country's language before departure.

How long is the flight? What is the time difference?

Flights vary depending on distance, amount of stops and direction of travel. You can check with your airline reservations to find the exact time of departure and landing. Israel is generally 7 hours ahead of EST. Arrival times by airline are shown in local times. Besides the basics, here are some things we recommend you bring for any international journey:

What are the meals like?

Breakfast and dinner are usually included at the hotels daily (please see your brochure). Food is buffet style, so all types are available. Beverages are not included at dinner. For special requirements on the flights, please let us know beforehand.

International Travel Checklist

- Photocopy of your Passport (leave one copy at home)
- Camera with Memory Card or Film
- Watch
- Electrical Converter
- Travel Alarm Clock
- **Comfortable Walking Shoes**
- Bathing Suit (Optional)
- Travel Size Toiletries
- Washcloth
- And here are some things you will need depending on the weather, so be sure to check the weather forecast first!
- **REMEMBER, DRESS IN LAYERS.** Shirt, sweater, jacket which you can remove as the day gets warmer.
- If you choose the Baptism, there will be an extra charge for the facilities to shower afterward, a towel and a robe for the Jordan River. We recommend you bring dry underthings after the baptism. Those that do not choose the Baptism are allowed to shop or witness the service at no extra charge.
- Raincoat/Waterproof Jacket
- Light or Heavy Jacket

Also:

- Sweatshirt(s)
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Umbrella
- Small First-Aid Kit
- Sewing Kit
- Coin Purse
- Laundry Bag (for dirty clothes)
- Journal and Pen
- Extra Batteries & film or digital card for camera